

1. INFILTRATION

The hard core of the Communist insurgents in South Vietnam are thousands of so-called "cadre" who have been infiltrated clandestinely from North Vietnam to form the officers, the technicians, the weapons specialists, the political leadership and the crack units of the Viet Cong main force battalions. Until the last year or two, most of these were ethnic Southerners who moved to North Vietnam after the signing of the 1954 Accords. Beginning about 1959, the North Vietnamese regime began ordering these individuals to report for special training and movement south. The regime has established a dozen or so large training centers where these infiltrators are trained in guerrilla tactics, ambushes and sabotage, and given heavy political indoctrination on the necessity for armed seizure of power in the South. Then they are trucked to the Laotian border, where they begin a march of a month or two along jungle and mountain trails, in groups of 5 to 500 men, to join assigned units in northern or central South Vietnam. Thousands of men are engaged just in operating the way-stations and supplies along these elaborate infiltration routes. Interrogations of prisoners have established that at least 19,000 and probably closer to 34,000 infiltrators were sent by North Vietnam into the South between January 1959 and August 1964. The rate has been increasing, with an estimated 10,000 infiltrators for the whole of 1964. And as the supply of former Southerners has dried up, there has been an increasing trend in the last year or two toward sending whole units of young Northern draftees who have never been in South Vietnam before.

2. WEAPONS

Along with the key manpower, the bulk of the modern and the heavier Viet Cong weapons are supplied by North Vietnam, presumably largely by sea. At least 75% of the weapons of the VC main force battalions -- and nearly all of their crew-served weapons, including 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles -- are Chinese Communist weapons from North Vietnam. I have here some of the more portable weapons of the type captured in the huge cache at Vung Ro Bay in February. These are standard Chinese Communist weapons, manufactured in China as copies of Soviet weapons. They use the Chicom 7.62 ammunition that must be supplied covertly from outside South Vietnam. Since these weapons are an increasing proportion of all Viet Cong weapons, the Viet Cong are becoming increasingly dependent on this outside supply of ammunition and parts.

[Hardware will be (1) Chinese submachine gun, (2) Chinese light machine gun, (3) rocket launcher, (4) rocket, and (5) some rounds of 7.62 ammunition.]

3. NEGOTIATIONS

We know from many interrogations and other sources that the North Vietnamese regime supplies not only training and the key manpower and materiel but the over-all planning and direction of the Viet Cong efforts in the South. Faced by this over-all pattern of aggression, the Government of South Vietnam has called for US assistance, and we are committed to continuing that assistance as long as Communist aggression and terrorism requires it. So far as discussions or negotiations are concerned, as President Johnson has stated, the United States will never be second in seeking a settlement in Vietnam that is based on an end of Communist aggression. To provide an honorable peace, negotiations would have to end in a reliable arrangement to guarantee the independence and security of all in Southeast Asia. So far, there has been no word from any Communist leader -- no hint, no gesture -- suggesting that the Communists are interested in talks that might lead to such a result. What they are willing to talk about -- and so far, all that they seem willing to talk about -- is the stoppage of US strikes, the withdrawal of US assistance, and the ending of South Vietnamese resistance to their aggression. When they are interested in discussions which offer any promise of ending that aggression, all they will have to do is to say so.

4. STRIKES AGAINST THE NORTH

So long as the Communist aggression continues -- whether or not the Communists prove willing to talk about the possibility of ending it -- the US will continue its actions to counter the aggression in support of the Government of South Vietnam. Since February our actions have included US air strikes and support to Vietnamese air strikes against carefully selected military targets in North Vietnam. Those targets have been chosen so as to reduce the capability of the North Vietnamese to infiltrate men and materiel by land and sea into South Vietnam. Another purpose of the strikes is to influence the minds of the Communist leadership in Hanoi. Those leaders have been actively engaged in attempting to establish a Communist dictatorship over the whole of Vietnam for 20 years, since the end of World War II. No one believes that they will give up that goal easily. An essential part of the process must be to convince them that their efforts in the South cannot succeed. These strikes are proving to them for the first time that their acts of aggression do bring danger to them directly and do carry costs. They will help speed the day when the Communist leaders face the realization that the risks of further aggression outweigh the rewards.

5. THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Where do we stand today in South Vietnam? With the big exception of the attack on the US Embassy, there has been a lull in VC incidents for the last few weeks. But there have been lulls before, and it is too soon to read much into this. There is a working, civilian government in Saigon, for the first time in many months; the leadership is able, for the most part, but again, it is too soon to project its performance very far into the future. The US and Vietnamese air strikes have already had the important tangible effect of increasing morale both among the civilians and the military of South Vietnam. The new pressure on the North, and the evidence it gives of the strength of the US commitment, gives them hope that their long struggle for independence in peace will win out eventually. But a tough struggle remains. There is no sign that the Communists have reduced their infiltration as yet; on the contrary, they may well be increasing it, with serious consequences for the northern parts of South Vietnam. The requirement for US assistance is a matter that needs constant review, and the outlook in the near future is for more rather than less. But whatever it takes, the US does not intend to permit the Communist aggression to be successful.